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STATE PASS TO USAID/OTI FOR J. SHERMAN AND J. RIGBY
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2018
TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC EAID ZI
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI BRIEFS ON MDC STRATEGY

Classified By: CDA Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: MDC president Morgan Tsvangirai briefed Embassy Harare representatives in Gabarone on December 18 and December 20 on a 60-day strategic plan he hopes to launch in early January. The plan will include continued negotiations on power sharing, efforts to channel humanitarian assistance to the needy, diplomatic outreach, an information campaign, a "Friends of Zimbabwe" international summit, and MDC party building. Tsvangirai said he would return to Zimbabwe after receiving his passport (which he has since received). END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) At Tsvangirai's request, representatives of USAID/Harare's Democracy and Governance unit and OTI/Washington met with Tsvangirai and senior MDC advisors in Gabarone on December 18 and December 20 to discuss MDC plans and how the USG can assist. Tsvangirai expressed his frustration over the lack of progress in implementing the Inter-Party Political Agreement signed on September 15 and said he believed the MDC need to pursue a more pro-active transitional strategy. The MDC leadership planned to meet in South Africa on January 5 to finalize a 60-day plan that had been conceptualized in meetings during the last two months.

¶3. (C) Outlining the plan, Tsvangirai said the MDC would continue to participate in power-sharing negotiations and would attempt to apply more pressure on SADC, the AU, and the UN to in turn pressure ZANU-PF to equitably share power and schedule timely and internationally supervised elections. Additionally, the MDC would attempt to channel humanitarian assistance to the needy and point out the ineffectiveness of the GOZ in responding to the humanitarian crisis. The MDC would speak out more forcefully on the government's human rights abuses and political prosecutions. Other components of the strategy were MDC party strengthening and a "Friends of Zimbabwe" international summit to discuss Zimbabwe's future and donor assistance.

¶4. (C) Tsvangirai stated the 60-day plan would require

significant resources that the MDC would seek from donors. He planned to designate a senior MDC official to help formulate proposals and serve as a liaison with donors. He added he hoped to discuss the overall plan as soon as possible with Ambassador McGee.

¶ 15. (C) Regarding his return to Zimbabwe, Tsvangirai said Mugabe had recently (through intermediaries) invited him to return to Zimbabwe to resume power-sharing discussions. He said he wished to return but only after receiving his passport (which he has since received) and assurances of his safety and that of other MDC leaders.

¶ 16. (C) COMMENT. The MDC has lacked an overall strategy apart from its participation in negotiations with ZANU-PF, and we await with interest the specifics of the strategy to be discussed next week in South Africa. The cornerstone of any strategy will be the presence of Tsvangirai in Harare to speak out on humanitarian and human rights issues, and to provide leadership to his party and supporters. END COMMENT.

DHANANI